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Public Health Update

December 1, 2011

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World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day is recognized today, December 1. This observance marks the day when people from different countries, cities, and towns unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV, and observe the countless lives lost to AIDS. The day gives people the opportunity to commemorate the accomplishments and achievements that have been reached so far in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It also is a reminder to researchers, advocates, and affected and infected individuals the work that remains to be done.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that as of 2009 the number of people living with HIV reached 33.3 million globally. The numbers of people newly infected with HIV was 2.6 million. AIDS-related deaths reached 1.8 million people.

Maine is not immune to the epidemic; as the end of 2010, there were 1,563 people living with diagnosed HIV in Maine, with 59 cases diagnosed in 2010 alone. Additional Maine information is available on the Maine CDC website at:

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/hiv-std/data/index.shtml>

This month's *Vital Signs* feature from US CDC is dedicated to HIV Prevention Through Care and Treatment:

<http://go.usa.gov/5Dj> The related early-release MMWR is available at <http://go.usa.gov/5DD>

Maine CDC's HIV, STD, and Viral Hepatitis Program is commemorating World AIDS Day with a display of the AIDS Quilt located in the lobby of 286 Water Street in Augusta. Please take some time to remember the individuals we have lost. The program will also have a table set up today to provide additional information on HIV testing and prevention.

Legionella

Maine, along with other New England states and parts of Canada, is seeing an increase in legionellosis cases in 2011. This year, 18 confirmed cases have been reported to Maine CDC, compared to 11 at the same time last year. The 5-year median is 10 cases. Cases range in age from 26 to 89 years, and have occurred in eight different counties. Maine saw 3 cases in the first half of 2011, but 15 in the last half of 2011. 12 of the 18 cases occurred in the last three months. No common exposure has been identified between any of the cases.

For more information, see the Health Alert issued on Nov. 28: <http://go.usa.gov/5DW>

Pertussis

More than 160 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) have been reported in Maine so far in 2011, compared with 53 for all of 2010 and 80 in 2009. About 64% of 2011 cases have been in residents of Penobscot County. Clusters of pertussis have been reported in schools, camps, sport teams, and workplaces.

Pertussis is a highly communicable, vaccine-preventable respiratory disease that can last for many weeks. It is spread from person to person through the air. The first signs of pertussis are similar to a cold (sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever, and a cough). After one or two weeks, the cough gets worse. Pertussis can be very serious, especially in infants. The most common complication of pertussis is bacterial pneumonia. Rare complications include seizures, inflammation of the brain, and death.

For more information, see the Health Alert issued on Nov. 14: <http://go.usa.gov/5DB>

Influenza update

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) will be held December 4-10. It is not too late to be vaccinated. As long as flu viruses are spreading and causing illness, vaccination should continue and can provide protection against the flu. Even unvaccinated people who have already gotten the flu can still benefit from vaccination, since the flu vaccine protects against three different flu viruses and more than one flu virus circulates each season. Last season, all three influenza viruses in the vaccine circulated widely in the US.

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older. You can search for flu clinics by county at <http://www.211maine.org/flu-clinics/> or by zipcode at www.flu.gov

Maine CDC reminds everyone to take everyday preventive measures against influenza by washing hands, covering coughs, and staying home when sick. No flu activity was reported in Maine for the week ending Nov. 26. Weekly updates on flu activity are available online:

- for Maine: <http://go.usa.gov/ITD>
- for the US: <http://go.usa.gov/ITB>
- for the world: <http://go.usa.gov/ITK>

Maine CDC has already distributed more than 197,000 doses of state-supplied influenza vaccine to registered providers for the 2011-2012 season.

More than 100 school districts are offering school-located flu vaccine clinics (SLVC) again this year. More than 330 clinics are registered. A list of participating schools is posted at <http://go.usa.gov/ITk>

Breast cancer motorcycle plate

An effort is underway to create a Maine Breast Cancer specialty license plate for motorcycles, similar to the specialty plate for automobiles that was first released in 2008. In order to begin a formal legislative process to gain approval for the specialty plate, 500 reservations (along with payment of \$25) must be obtained. These reservations guarantee a plate when they become available.

Proceeds from these license plates will be evenly distributed among the Maine Cancer Foundation; the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition's Support Service Fund; and Maine CDC's Breast and Cervical Health Program, which will allocate funds directly to the cost of mammograms received by clients age 40-49.

For more information or to reserve a plate, visit <http://www.mainecancer.org/motorcycle>

Other updates

- **Immunization of health care personnel.** US CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has updated its previously published summary of recommendations for vaccinating health care personnel in the US: <http://go.usa.gov/5DN>
- **Winter health.** Parts of Maine have already had some snow accumulation. US CDC has some helpful preparedness tips for winter weather available at <http://go.usa.gov/5DX> Maine CDC also has information on safe wood burning, preventing carbon monoxide poisoning, and preventing hypothermia at <http://go.usa.gov/5D5>

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**For clinical consultation and outbreak management guidance, call Maine CDC's toll-free 24-hour phone line:
1-800-821-5821**